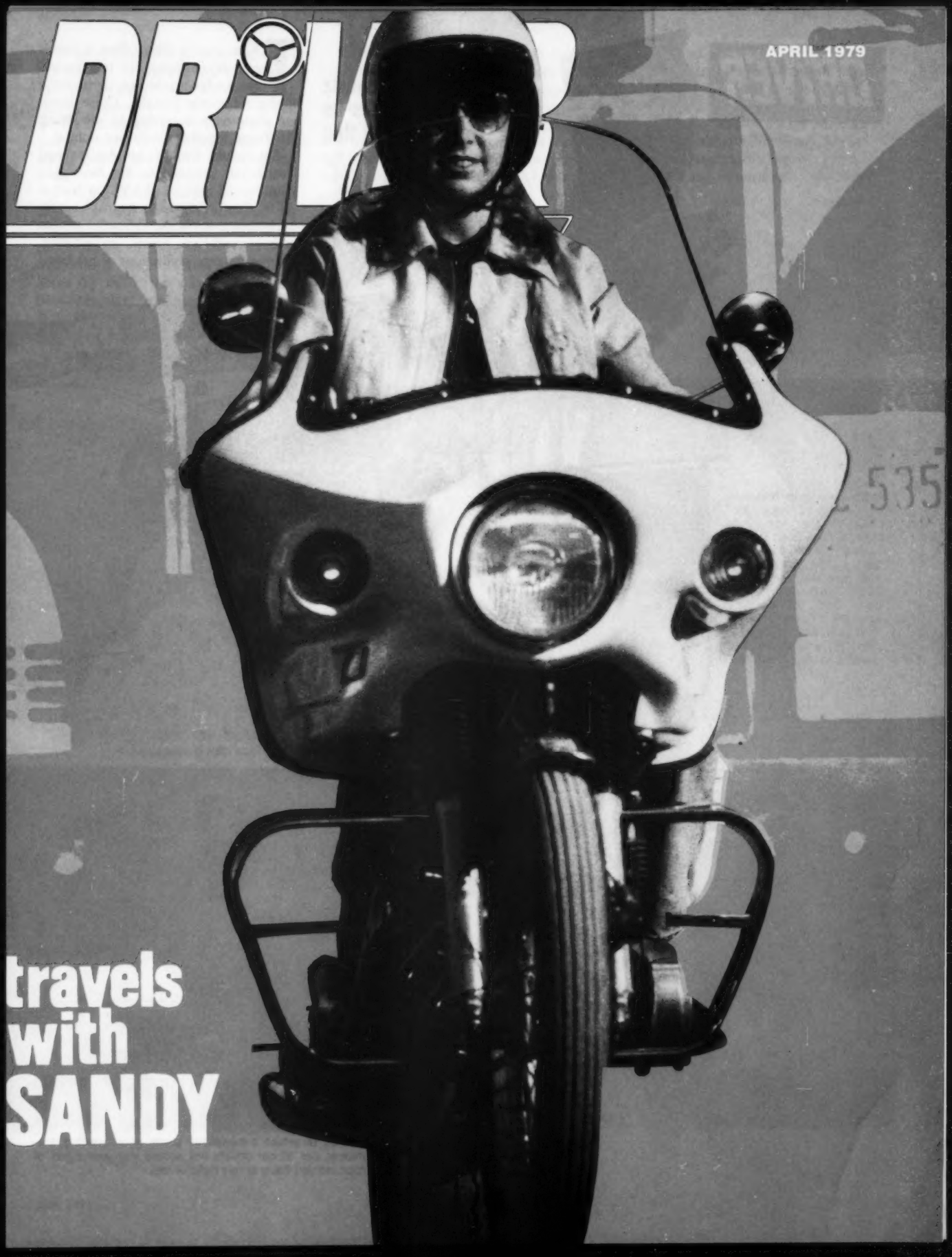
DRIVER

APRIL 1979



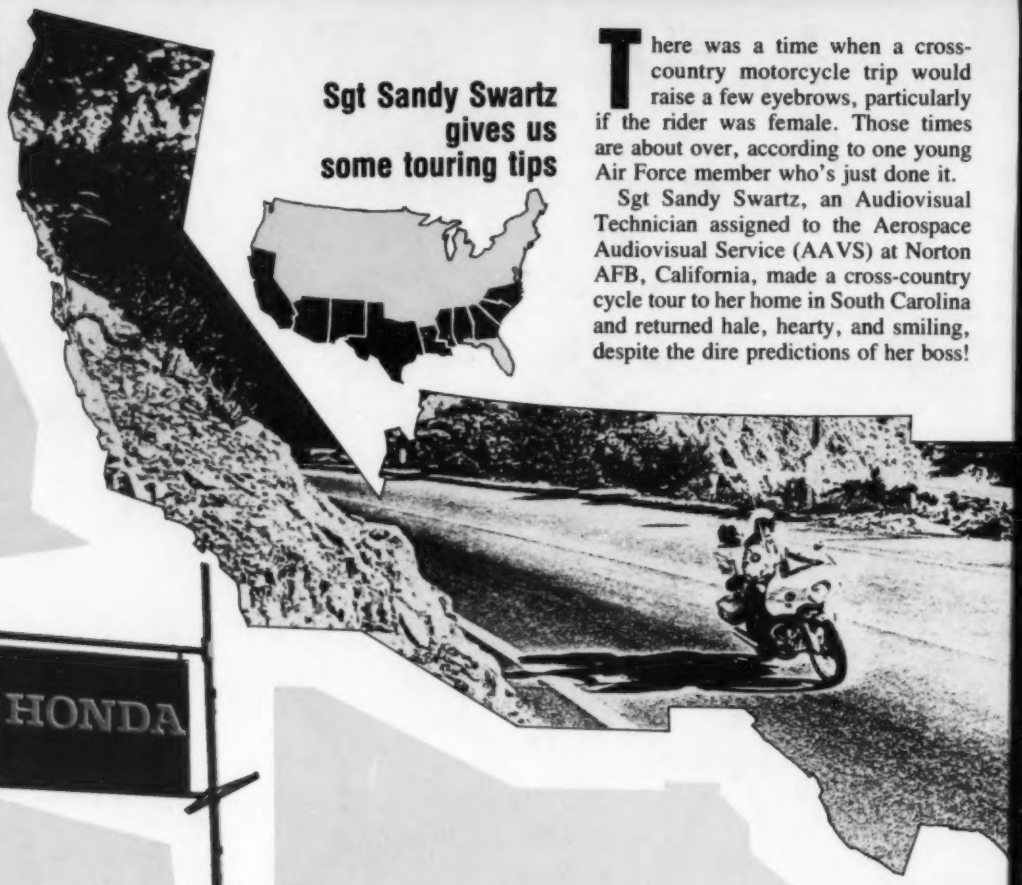
travels with SANDY

DRiVER

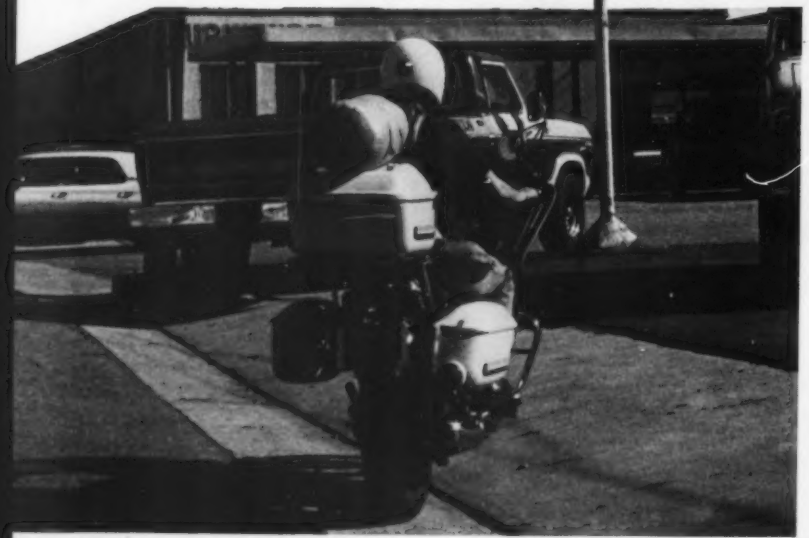
Sgt Sandy Swartz gives us some touring tips

There was a time when a cross-country motorcycle trip would raise a few eyebrows, particularly if the rider was female. Those times are about over, according to one young Air Force member who's just done it.

Sgt Sandy Swartz, an Audiovisual Technician assigned to the Aerospace Audiovisual Service (AAVS) at Norton AFB, California, made a cross-country cycle tour to her home in South Carolina and returned hale, hearty, and smiling, despite the dire predictions of her boss!



(below)
If you run into trouble while you're touring, try the local dealer for your make of bike. Even though I was a stranger, they were always very good to me. Also, join Help 'N Hands, 9283 Tenth Ave., Hesperia, Calif., 92345. They are an organization that will assist fellow cyclists, and there are members all across the States.



Now this is what I consider pretty good spacing. Unfortunately, not all car drivers will accord you your rights of the road, so you have to ride defensively.

"I knew I could do it," she told us on her return. "I entered the Air Force, and, incidentally, took up motorcycle riding, because I don't believe in the female stereotype. You know, a woman marries, has kids, and spends her days taking care of the house. That's not me at all.

"I ride a motorcycle because it's less expensive than owning a car, and because I enjoy it, not because I want to shock people or show them I can do a traditionally male-oriented thing. I go about my riding the way most cyclists do, with care, planning, and a good attitude . . . that's not male or female, that's just good sense."

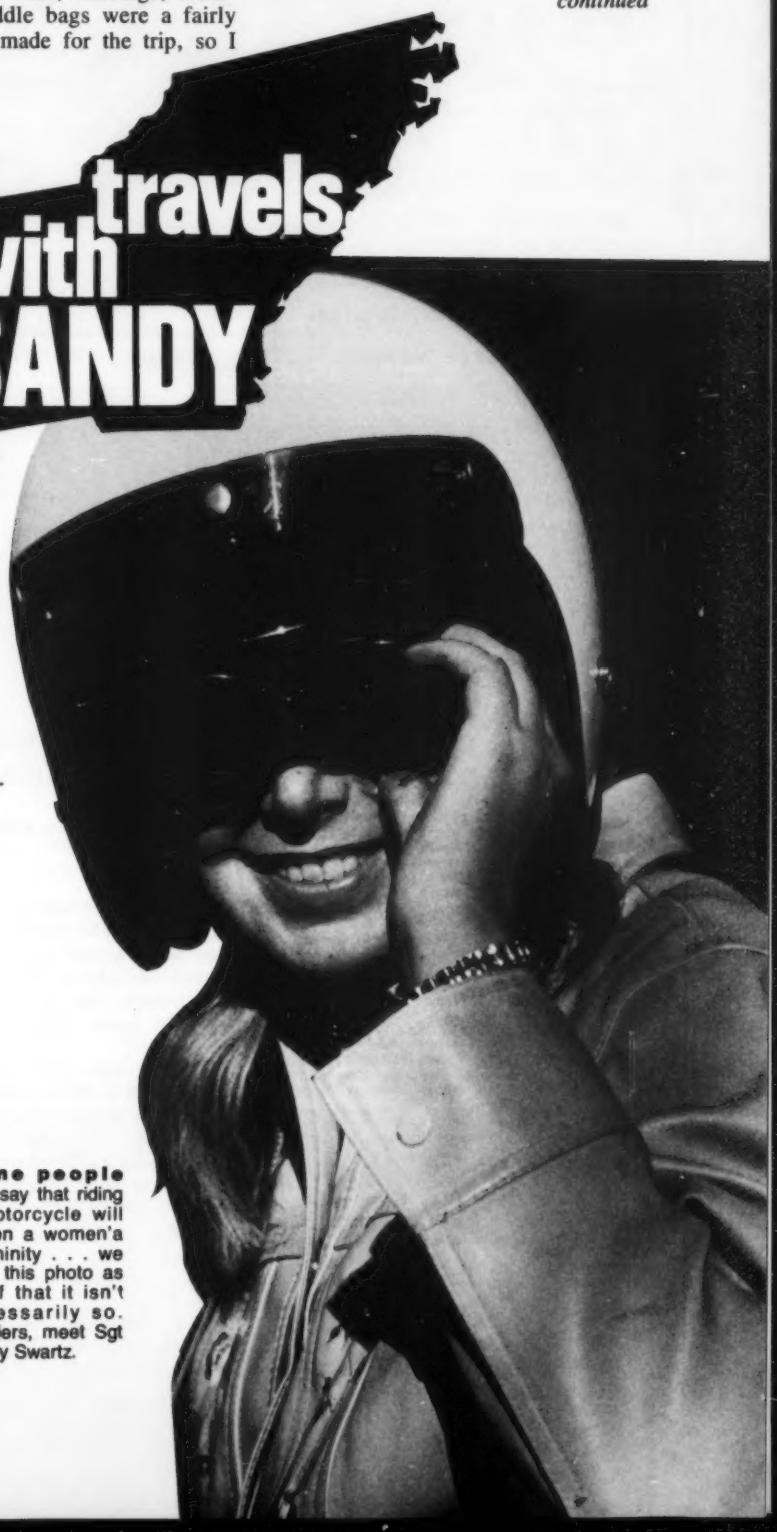
Sandy has been riding for over four years and is considered an experienced cyclist, but for her first cross-country jaunt she didn't just pack some spare clothes and take off. "Ron Patterson, who's my mechanic, and I darn near took that bike apart looking for possible problem areas before I left. We checked everything for wear, breakage, looseness. The saddle bags were a fairly new addition made for the trip, so I filled them up and made several test rides in the local area to check the mounting brackets and to see if they would cause any stability problems.

"I made two- and three-day practice runs in the months before I left. These gave me a chance to try out my camping gear, my bad-weather gear, and even

continued

travels with SANDY

Photos by SSgt ROB MARSHALL
Aerospace Audiovisual Service



Some people may say that riding a motorcycle will lessen a women'a femininity . . . we offer this photo as proof that it isn't necessarily so. Readers, meet Sgt Sandy Swartz.

DRIVER

THE
TRAFFIC SAFETY MAGAZINE
FOR THE MILITARY DRIVER

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HQ AIR FORCE INSPECTION AND SAFETY CENTER
Norton Air Force Base, California 92409

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY IN COOPERATION WITH
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
AND
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

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AFRP 127-1
Controlled Circulation Permit number
USPS 448-630

SUBSCRIPTION—DRIVER is available on subscription for $12.00 per year domestic ($1.00 per copy); $15.00 per year for foreign mailing ($1.25 per copy), through the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Back issues are not available. Changes in subscription mailings should be sent to the above address. Use of funds for printing this publication has been approved by Headquarters, United States Air Force, Department of Defense, Washington, D.C. No payment can be made for manuscripts submitted for publication. Contributions are welcomed, as are comments and criticism. Address all correspondence to the Editor, DRIVER Magazine, AFISC/SEDD, Norton AFB, CA 92409.

ATTENTION DEPT OF THE NAVY PERSONNEL: Address all queries concerning distribution to NAVSAFECEN, NAS, NORFOLK, VA 23511, Attn: Safety Publications Dept. All other correspondence will be welcomed by the Editor.

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VOLUME 12 NUMBER 11

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THE EDITOR SPEAKS DOUBLE CLUTCH

NEW CAR SHOPPING

Time was when shopping for a new car was fun. Today it can be ulcer city. So many makes and models, so much optional equipment, so many different price stickers. How do you recognize a good deal when somebody offers you one?

If you're looking for a bigger car, maybe it's still OK to wait for the end of summer, when the inventories are traditionally discounted (although we noticed February increases in both the New Yorker and the Continental Mark V, should you be in that price range).

But if you want a smaller car with good gas mileage—as most of us do—waiting for price reductions may not be smart. When it comes to the most popular models and options, the manufacturers seem to be introducing the cars at the lowest price possible and then gradually adding increases through the year. During 1978, a Ford Pinto rose 8½%. Chevrolet's Chevette had four price increases in six months for a combined rise of 11%.

If the whole scene has you baffled, you might want to spend a little money (from $4 to $10) with a broker, who will furnish you computer price sheets showing exactly what the dealer paid the factory for the car you want. Armed with that information, you can shop intelligently for a reasonable deal. Don't forget that some costs, such as dealer's make-ready, sales tax and license, must always be considered.

Three such brokers are United Auto Brokers, Inc. (1603 Bushwick Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11207), Nationwide Auto Brokers, Inc. (17517 W. 10 Mile Road, Southfield, MI 48075), and Motor Club

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some of my camp recipes. I found I had a lot to learn about the correct way to pack all the things I'd need, and I also found some additional items that needed to be taken along.

"As I planned the trip, I made sure there would be plenty of time available so I didn't have to push to make a schedule. Once on the trip, I had only one problem, aside from the usual small mechanical glitches . . . I had a hard time finding places that would cash my checks. On the road, I solved that by just planning to be near an Air Force or other military installation about the time I would need money. I stopped at bases all across the states, and I found that they were great places to meet people and get a cheap meal as well as do the laundry that piled up!

"Some people say that cyclists are bad people, but I didn't see that attitude at all. In fact, one time I left my wallet (with about $40 in it) in a phone booth. I discovered this fact about 80 miles down the road. I decided to go back, just in case someone had turned it in. When I checked the restaurant near the phone booth, they handed me my wallet, with the money still in it, and told me they were glad to help. In fact, everywhere I stopped, people would look at the California plates and strike up a conversation about 'gee, that's a long way to ride' etc.

"Now, I can't say the trip was flawless. I had some problems with the weather, and some folks in one small town weren't too crazy about having a 'sickle-rider' stop for gas, but these were minor aggravations compared to the tone of the whole trip. I met some wonderful people who went out of their way for me, and I'm sure that if you go cycle touring and conduct yourself nicely, you'll get the same treatment.

"Next year, I'm going to do it again. Only this time, I'm going to be on a Gold Wing instead of a 550 . . . now *that* should be a trip!"

One thing I found was that local traffic authorities aren't lying when they put up warning signs . . . if you see a warning sign, you can *believe* it!

Not all motorists are familiar with cyclists. You're still a bit of a curiosity, particularly if you're a woman rider, so car drivers pull in real close for a better look. All you can do is back off to make sure you have a clear zone around you.

Riding in rural areas can be a beautiful experience, but it can be dangerous, too. Watch out for slow-moving farm vehicles, and pay attention to the sides of the road. Small, unmarked lanes and side streets can suddenly dump people out in front of you. Don't be so taken in with the beauty around you that you forget to ride safely.

photos continued on next page

I think one of the most important things to learn about riding is lane position. In these two pictures, notice I try to position myself just to the left of the oil strip, but still leave some space between me and the lane divider. This also gives you plenty of "escape" space toward the right side of the road.

One of the nicest things about touring is camping out. I'd advise you to stay at an organized campground though, just for a little added peace of mind.

When you're ready to pack up, try to keep all the bits and pieces for one item of equipment *with* that equipment. It's no fun trying to set up camp with a rain squall on the horizon, and then get soaked because you couldn't find the tent pegs!

When breaking or setting up camp, it's a good idea to shake out the tent and sleeping bag, especially if the thought of sharing your gear with little scaly or many-legged critters isn't your idea of fun. Same thing goes with clothes.

Packing what you need and yet doing it right so that cycle handling isn't affected is one of the hardest things to learn.

I'd advise that you make a few trial packing runs before you actually depart on the trip. Keep the load low and centered.

I'm not crazy about mandatory helmet laws, but you've gotta admit that an approved, good-fitting helmet is the best piece of protective gear that you can have.

Before you pull off onto the road shoulder, look at it closely to make sure it's not loose dirt or sand, or full of ruts.

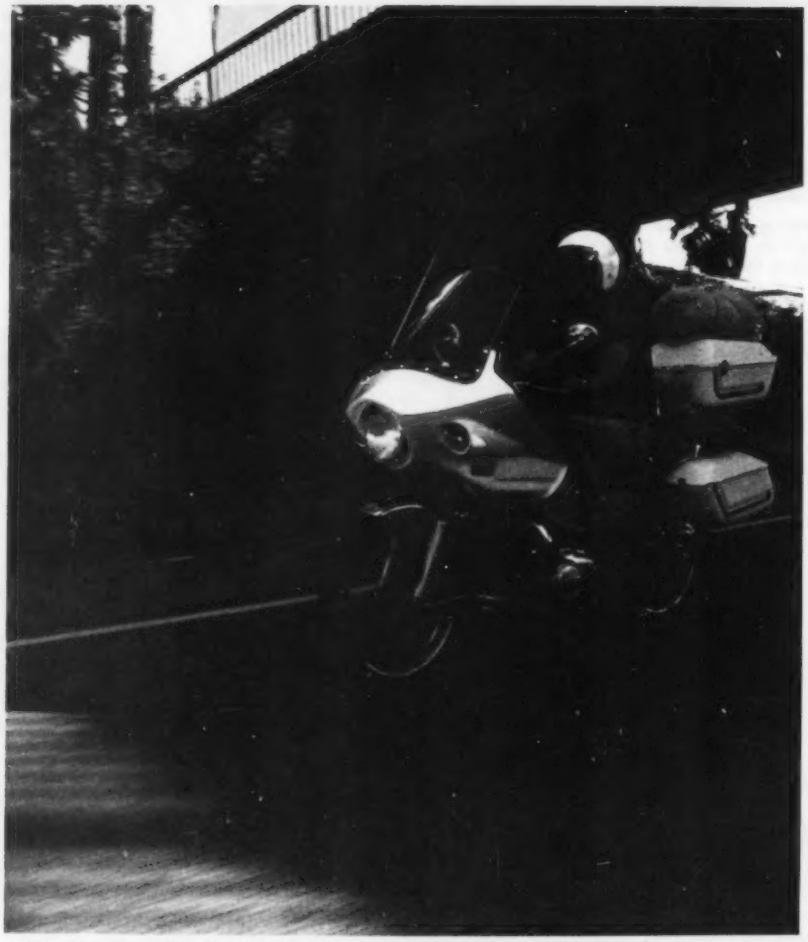
travels with sandy

continued

Check chain tension and wear pattern at least once each riding day. I use a brand of chain that says it never needs lube, but I found that isn't true . . . even the dense-lube type of chains need lubrication after a while.

A good pair of shatter-resistant sunglasses is a very nice thing to have. I prefer these to tinted face shields because they are less prone to scratching and they are more easily removable in case lighting conditions quickly change.

No reason you can't have a little humor when you wear your thermal undies. The logo is my personal philosophy!



This picture points out two things; one is that a large, bright fairing can make you more visible, and two, any time you're in a shadow you're super-hard to see.

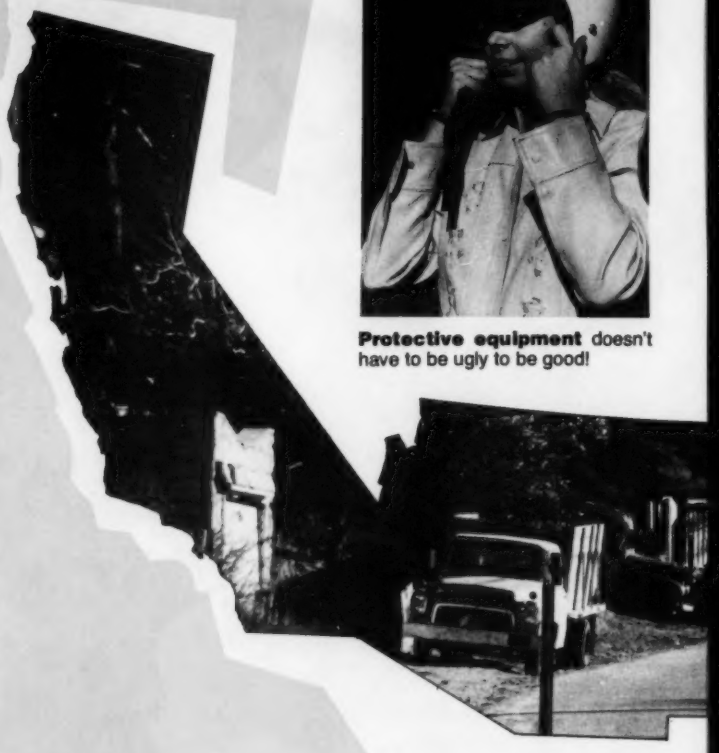
(right)
I can't put enough stress on the importance of using eye protection. The sun and wind can make you squint. and that isn't the best way to avoid accidents.

travels with sandy

continued

You've got to ride "three cars ahead" when in traffic. Looking at the brake lights of the vehicle two or three cars ahead of you can save you grief by providing you with more time to get on the brakes and look for that escape route when things get a bit sticky.

Protective equipment doesn't have to be ugly to be good!



I try to give car drivers as much information as possible about what I'm doing or going to do. I've also observed that hand signals are just enough out of the ordinary so that car drivers notice you, and that's what "conspicuity" is all about.

(above)
Those blurs in the background are houses! The photographer panned with me as he took this picture. Can you imagine going this fast through a residential area? I hope not!

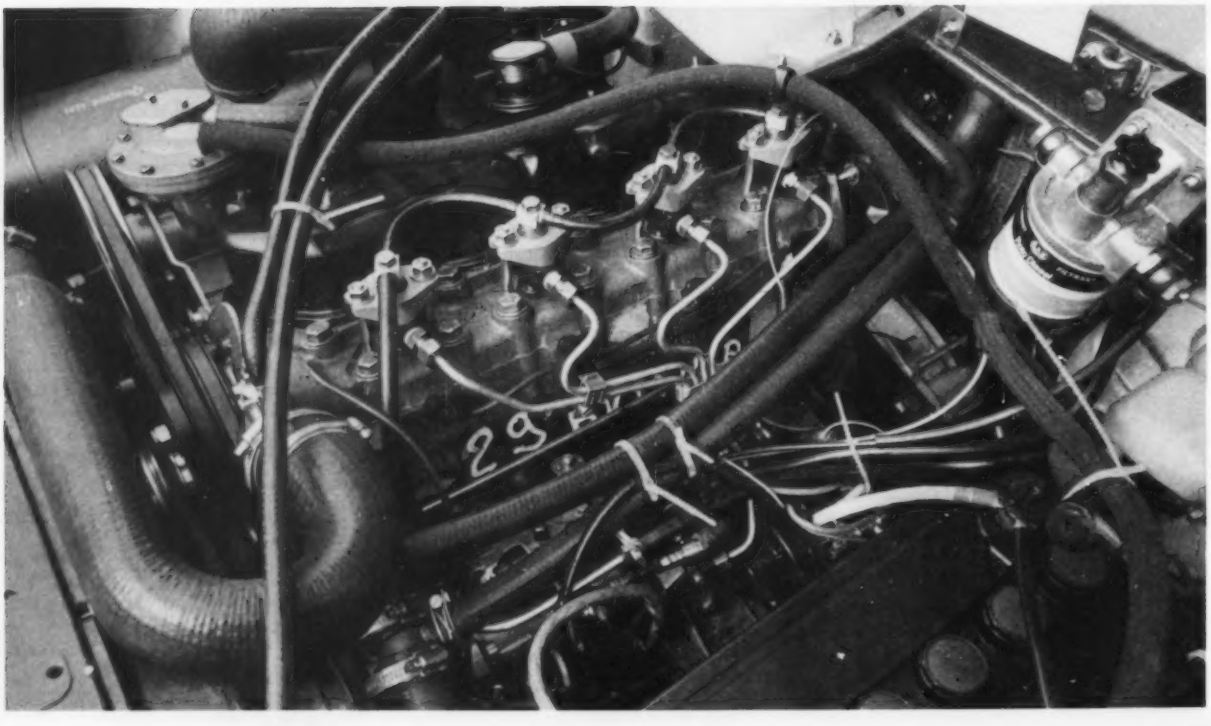
(left)
Look neat while traveling through rural areas. Small-town people are sometimes suspicious of strangers, so it helps to make a nice first impression. Don't go to small towns where the local movie palace is showing a cycle-gang picture!

(right)
When some turkey pulls up *right* behind you, it can make you a bit nervous and upset. Although losing your temper and giving him or her a piece of your mind can make you feel better, it really doesn't help anything and can even make the car driver get aggressive . . . something *no* cyclist needs.

(right)
I try to sit as upright as possible. It's better on the ol' back, it looks nicer than being all slumped down, and you're able to reach all the controls just that fraction of a second faster.

DIESEL YES OR NO MYSTERY

With some diesel engines now on the market and others coming down the road, motorists have become curious about how they compare with gasoline engines. The Automotive Information Council offers the following:



The biggest difference is that diesels do not have spark plugs or a carburetor. Instead of using a spark to ignite the fuel-air mixture provided by the carburetor, diesels inject fuel into the engine and cause the fuel to explode by compressing it under great pressure. Diesel engines have a compression ratio of about 22 to 1, versus an average of 8 to 1 for a gasoline engine.

These rapid-fire explosions are what cause the diesel to have its unique "clicking" sound. The car companies use sound-insulating materials to muffle the clicks.

The Adventure of the 22 to 1 Compression Ratio

The high compression ratio requires a stronger and heavier engine block. A typical U.S. car diesel weighs 500 pounds more than its gasoline counterpart and costs perhaps $750 more. Costs are expected to come down when volume increases.

A major advantage to a diesel is fuel economy, about 20 to 25 per cent better than with a gasoline engine. However, diesels also have 10 to 20 per cent less power than a gasoline engine of the same size, so a driver has to adjust to the slower acceleration.

A diesel won't start until it's warmed up, which formerly took a full minute or even more. The newer engines are equipped with a glow plug which warms the unit in a few seconds. A start-light informs the driver when the car is ready to go.

Diesels will not chase away gasoline engines, but their unique sound will be heard more and more often as the years go by, says AIC, but only if the Federal Government permits it.

The Environmental Protection Agency recently proposed strict new emission standards for diesel engines in 1983, which the auto makers say they cannot meet.

The new rule calls for particulate exhaust emissions of 0.2 grams per mile in 1983, compared with 0.6 grams in 1981. One company said the difference between the 0.6 and the 0.2 would be about three ounces less dust from a mile-long convoy of bumper-to-bumper diesel cars.

Car makers are seeking a change in the rule.

Remove the well caps from both batteries. This is necessary because the vents in these caps, even if open, often don't provide adequate ventilation of hydrogen gas generated by the battery.

If you're sure the dead battery isn't iced up, cover the wells of each battery with 2 layers of cloth. This provides better dissipation of the hydrogen gas and minimizes danger from sparks.

Find the "positive" terminal of both batteries. This will be marked on the terminal post with either a "P" or a "+" mark. Connect one cable clip to the positive terminal of the live battery and the other clip on the same cable to the positive terminal of the dead battery.

Jack be nimble Jack be quick

Several recent incidents of exploding batteries prompts us to double check that our readers know how to jump-start a vehicle correctly. Let's face it, a dead battery will stop most of us some time or another. There's really only one right way to jump-start, and here it is:

■ Make sure that both the "live" and the "dead" batteries have the same

Here comes the switch from what you may have done before . . . connect one clip to the live battery's negative terminal, and the other end of the cable to the *frame* of the "dead" car. Place this clip as far from the battery as cable stretch will allow. This will help prevent any sparks from igniting the hydrogen gas.

jump starts

rated voltage. A 12-volt battery may burn out a 6-volt battery, and a six volter just doesn't have enough poop to crank over a 12-volt system.

■ Make certain that both vehicles have negative ground electrical systems. Check this by looking at the battery terminals . . . the terminal marked "-" or negative should have a wire running to the car's frame or engine block.

■ Insure the "dead" battery isn't frozen. Electrical current from a live battery could cause the dead one to explode, either from too much pressure or from a hydrogen gas detonation. If you're not sure whether the dead battery is frozen or not, our advise is don't try the jump start.

■ Bring both vehicles close together but not touching; you may cause sparks if they touch during the jump start.

■ Keep the "booster" car's engine running, turn off all accessory switches in the "dead" car, set both parking brakes, and don't stand between the two cars.

Now that you've made your preparations, let's move on to the pictures and check what to do next.

Start the "dead" car's engine. Now disconnect the 2 cables in *reverse* order. Detach clip from "dead" car's frame, and remove clip from live car's negative terminal. Take the clip off the dead car's positive terminal and then from the positive terminal of the live car.

Remove cloths from well holes and dispose of them where the battery acid on them won't injure anyone. Replace vent caps. Wrap up the jumper cables and store them in your car (aluminum cables get very hot during a jump start, so allow time for them to cool before putting them in the trunk). Now, with the previously "dead" car running, take it to your base hobby shop or local garage and find out what caused the dead battery. You might have a bad cell in the battery, or a ground in your electrical system.

by Sgt R. T. EDWARDS, USA
101 Airborne Division
Fort Campbell, KY

I like riding motorcycles. I love the feeling of openness it gives me . . . but, like everything else, there are days when you've gotta pay for your play. And, like other cyclists, I've had some hairy experiences with motorcycles. The incidents are funny when I look back on 'em, but at the time they didn't seem that way. I'd like to share some of my trials and tribulations with you. I think they're worth your time.

The first bike I ever had was a Honda 90. At the time, I thought it was pretty hot stuff. It had pep and vigor, and it was fun to ride. So, there I was, young and hot, a reg'lar Evel Kneivel, tooling along letting the breeze cool my fevered brow (gimme a break, will 'ya . . . it was only a 90. I didn't find out 'til later that a motorcycle could go fast enough to generate more than a "breeze").

My dreams of becoming a professional cycle racer were abruptly shattered, though, when I attempted to make a turn, in gravel, while squeezing the front brake handle. I must have made an interesting sight . . . a guy in business attire, knees torn out of his suit, kneeling in an interesection and looking for all the world like someone praying over a fallen comrade. Actually, I was trying to get the cinders out of my knee caps.

I was so young and inexperienced that, rather than stand around for a few minutes and make sure my bod wasn't damaged or in shock, I picked up my fallen machine and rode quickly to my trusty Honda dealer. He was not impressed with my riding skills. I'm not sure which was greater; the repair bill, or my mental anguish over crashing.

The lessons I learned in that wipeout go with me every time I ride a cycle . . . be a defensive rider, wear the proper protective clothing, think "out-in-front" of the cycle. I don't think lookin' out for yourself makes you any less of a man (or woman).

Anyway, you're probably wondering about the title of this little story . . . well, here it comes. Picture this: It's a three-day weekend, I've got a 650

and other things that go "BUMP" in your face or, motorcycling in Arizona

Yamaha, a full tank of gas, and $70 in the ol' pigskin and I'm gonna go to Tucson. In case you're wondering, my start-off point is Ft. Huachuca, near beautiful downtown Sierra Vista, Arizona. We call Ft. Huachuca "Fort Hoochy-Coochy," but I won't go into that story now.

So, there I was, lookin' forward to a trip to Tucson, and as I packed the sleeping bag, pup tent, tools and chain lube, I had a nagging feeling that there was something missing, but I just couldn't put my finger on it. Oh well, I had other things on my mind . . . I was sure I'd remember whatever it was I was missing, eventually.

Thoughts of what lay ahead in Tucson made me don my trusty helmet and tighten everything down in readiness for the trip. I also put on my riding gloves. Any of you who have ever ridden a 650 Yamaha at 6500 rpm know what the gloves are for! At any rate, since it was about 120 degrees (. . . but it's *dry* heat) and I wasn't getting any air-cooling, I unlimbered my faithful left leg and gave the automatic, self-propelled kick starter a mighty heave. As I turned on my headlight and rammed first gear home, I still had a nagging feeling, but since it was Friday, I'd been paid, and my bike was running, all I could do was head out toward the big city.

Once on the move, I reasoned that since it was Friday, every nut in the world would be on the road and that the passing lane was the place for me to be to keep away from the "snowbirds," rubberneckers that travel 12 mph and stop short a lot. I wasn't wrong.

Now, as you move through Huachuca City, there is an intersection known as "ground zero" for reasons which should be obvious. I slowed down instinctively. A quick check of the mirrors revealed that the road behind me was clear, and a glance ahead told me the intersection was not. Sure enough, there was a car waiting to play automotive cat to my motorcycle mouse.

But I fooled him. I wasn't the same rider that had dumped his Honda 90 in an intersection. I know that 75% of a cycle's braking ability is in the front wheel, so I grabbed the right lever hard and leaned on the rear brake pedal so it was just short of skidding. I kept the bike in a straight line and came to a nice safe stop at a distance from the car that was calculated to put an "aw shucks, he missed" look on the face of the driver. I enjoyed that . . . I enjoyed it a whole lot.

I had a smile on my face all the way up to Benson, until the first buzz-bomb hit my visor. It was at that point that I remembered exactly what I had left behind. Now, those of you who have never driven in Arizona may well ask "what's a buzz-bomb?"

Actually, a buzz-bomb is an Arizona beetle that weighs 12 pounds and is filled with a substance remarkably similar to axle grease. Well, maybe not 12 pounds, exactly, but the axle grease part is accurate, and if you've ever hit a buzz-bomb, you'll swear 12 pounds is about what they weigh.

When a grease-filled buzz-bomb hits your visor, you can believe me when I say it's instant IFR . . . I mean, you can't see anything! Those big, juicy critters that self-destruct themselves on your face mask just block out everything. To really picture this whole situation, you've got to key in on one word . . . just concentrate on the word "GOO" and see what your fertile mind comes up with.

So I flipped up my visor, downshifted, and pulled over to the side of the road. As I stood there, I was amazed at the extent of the profanity to which my mind had access. Imitating someone who has just torn up a winning ticket for the fifth race, I slapped my forehead (since I was wearing a helmet, I didn't feel it . . . lucky me) and asked myself, "OK, hero-driver, where are your cleaning materials?"

Just let me tell you that it is extremely frustrating to try wiping bug goo off your face shield with cactus thorns. Stuff hardens kinda fast in the Arizona sun . . .

I got lucky though. Only two more buzz-bombs dashed their little selves to death against my face shield in the remaining miles to Tucson. I promised to always have paper towels and a tiny bottle of window cleaner with me from then on.

Actually, as bad as buzz-bombs are, I managed to exceed their unpleasantness quota by a factor of at least .13 when I was hit by a flying tarantula. Would I lie?

A tarantula is a hairy (very hairy . . . as a matter of fact, they are so hairy, two would make a wig for Yul Brynner) spider that likes to sit in the middle of whatever road it is you choose to travel. These devils are about eight inches across and they go "oof" when you hit them, and then they try to grab your leg.

I was on my way to Tombstone (I should'a known then) when I spied some birds in the road ahead. They were working on a meal of big, hairy, tarantula, and were having little success, two of their group being dewinged in the process . . . I told you tarantulas were BAD.

As I pulled closer, the group of birds took flight and carried that disgusting critter with them, no doubt intending to take it to the Grand Canyon and see if the fall would kill it. A slight mis-

continued

bugs . . .

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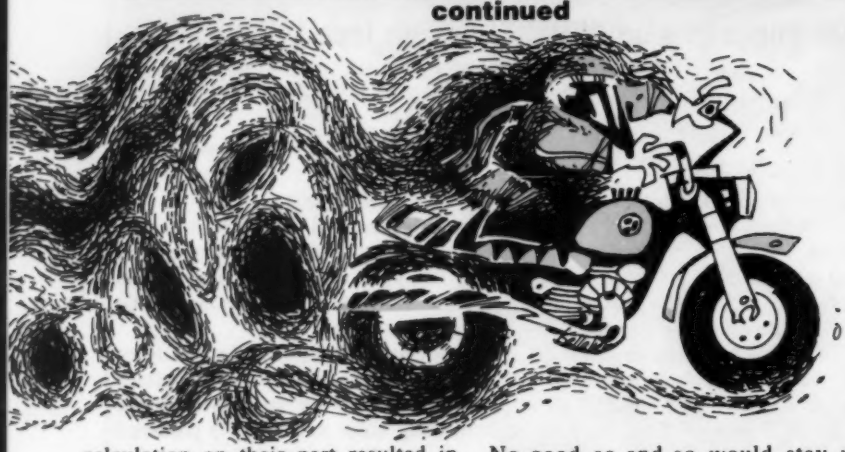


calculation on their part resulted in the tarantula being dropped on a course that converged with yours truly. One moment I was cruising along with the wind, and the next moment I was beset by a loud "POW," a large increase in aerodynamic drag, and "GREAT PAIN" as Mork has been heard to say.

There was no permanent damage (except to the tarantula), but I will say that I feel there is little in this world as disgusting as attempting to separate tarantula remains from a prized riding jacket. I kept thinking, "What if this thing had landed a foot shorter and I didn't have my helmet on?" I could imagine going to work and everyone making fun of me because I had the body of a man and the head of a spider . . .

The last incident I would like to relate could have taken place anywhere, since it presents a problem that isn't restricted to Arizona. It seems that when I would go to ride my trusty cycle on a weekend, it would have a flat tire. No-good so-and-so would stay up during the week when all I had to do was to get to work, but whenever a weekend rolled around, a slow leak would guarantee that I spend the better part of Saturday getting it fixed.

I took the wheel and tire to my bike shop and asked them to replace the tube. I went about some other errands and then returned to the shop, got my wheel (with new tube) out of hock, installed it, and went for a ride. I headed for Tombstone. I guess some people never learn . . .

I was in a gentle turn at about 55 mph when I noticed the back end was getting a bit squirrelly. For a second, I thought it was just me imagining things, but then, somewhere in my brain, a warning bell sounded. I managed to get out of the curve and upright before the tire and rim became separated. Believe me, a motorcycle in full flight with the back tire doing the Flat Tire Boogie is not, repeat, not, fun. I managed to get it stopped by gentle braking, but my knees didn't stop trembling for a while. A kindly gentleman happened by and gave me and the bike a ride in his pickup truck. We went back to the bike shop.

I have always believed that calmness is a virtue . . . unfortunately it is a virtue difficult to maintain when the shop weenie says he didn't actually replace the tube, he just patched the old one. I think that from now on I'll pay a bit closer attention to the repairs that are *supposed* to have been made to my bike.

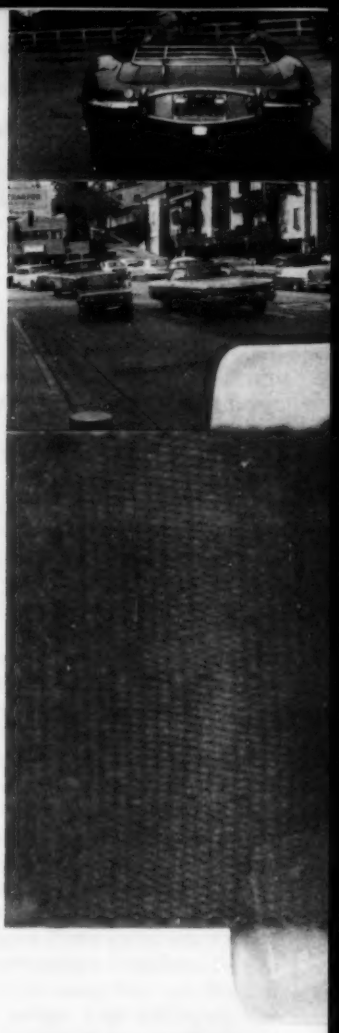
That's about all that has happened to me, so far. I hope my story has helped you a little bit, and I also hope you'll have a ball with the fun driving that you can do on a cycle. Many happy and safe miles to you.

DOUBLE CLUTCH

continued from page 2

Auto Buying Service (P.O. Box 2090, 11 Mile Lahser Station, Southfield, MI 48037).

Incidentally, an auto broker will book your order (American cars only) with your local dealer for a set amount over dealer cost if you want. But most people like to do their own shopping, once they have an idea of what the car should cost. United Auto Brokers offers its services through some credit unions and auto clubs, too.



seatbelts, WHAT seatbelts?

A letter we received recently from Army PFC Kenneth Hess listed reasons people give for not wearing seatbelts. We have more than casual interest in these, because we hear each of them at least once a week, usually when we insist our passengers buckle up. Frankly, most of these "reasons" are just flat nonsense, but we couldn't resist making some comments.

Here they are:

1. "They're uncomfortable." (They are adjustable to suit your comfort.)

2. "I don't need safety belts – I drive safe." (Maybe you do. But does *everyone* drive "safe"?)

3. "It's too much of a problem to wear them." (That's as vague a reason as we've ever heard.)

4. "They wrinkle my clothes." (So does sitting. Drive standing up.)

5. "I'm just going a short distance." (Accidents don't happen only on long trips, y'know.)

6. "What if I have an accident and the car catches fire?" (Cars do not catch fire often, and if yours did your seatbelt releases very quickly. A *much* more common occurrence is being thrown out of the car in an accident.)

7. "I can't see the road when I wear them." (Wear the shoulder strap across your *shoulder*, not over your *head.)*

8. "They're under the seat and I don't want to dig them up." (Are you lazy, or just dumb?)

9. "They're broken and I don't want to fix them." (Are you *cheap*, or just dumb?)

10. "They're too confining." (They're *supposed* to be confining. If being stopped from hitting the windshield is "too" confining, all the better.)

We have a few other favorites PFC Hess didn't mention: "Seatbelts cause injuries." (If you wear them incorrectly, maybe. Wear them down over your hips, not over your stomach.) "I do wear them when I'm driving on the freeway." (Did you know most accidents happen at intersections, not on freeways?) "If I wear it, the passenger will think I don't have confidence in my driving." Or if he's a passenger, the excuse will be "If I wear it, the driver will say, 'Don't you trust my driving?' " (Again, it's those *other* drivers you can't be sure of.)

Funny thing about excuses for not wearing belts. They're as common as *people* who don't wear belts – and as dumb. Come on, DRIVER readers. Have you heard any "reasons" as good as these? We could use a laugh.

Questions, Questions, Questions,

Q: Is undercoating a new car worth the extra price?

A: Most people believe that undercoating's primary purpose is to reduce rust under the car. Actually, the original purpose was to reduce the noise level inside the car. But the spray-on substance also coats the exposed metal parts. If you live near the beach or where it rains a lot, undercoating can be worthwhile. Otherwise, forget it. On an older car, if the coating is sprayed on without a thorough cleaning beforehand, it will merely lock the rust in place.

Q: Is a flashing red light at night the same as a 4-way stop on a regular stop sign?

A: Yes. A flashing red light, day or night, means that you must make a complete stop until it is safe to continue. Yield the right of way to vehicles on right.

Q: How many DWI convictions are allowed before the state suspends your driver's license?

A: In some states, one conviction is enough to have your license suspended for a year. Frequently, it's up to the judge. Generally speaking, all jurisdictions are coming down harder on the drunk driver.

Q: What do I do if my car has a blowout while driving at high speed?

A: *Don't* slam on the brakes, which might make you lose control completely. Grip the steering wheel firmly to guide the car on a straight path. Ease up on the gas pedal slowly, not suddenly. When the car has slowed down, pump lightly on the brake; then when things are well under control, the car running slowly, pull gently off the road.

Q: Are there special precautions, besides not smoking, to take when cleaning things with gasoline?

A: The main precaution is to *never use gasoline as a cleaner*. Or a solvent. Or a charcoal starter. Gasoline is dangerous, tricky stuff. It vaporizes easily and the invisible vapors are heavier than air. They can spread along the floor for quite a distance to a water heater, electric motor, car engine. If you use gasoline anyway, for heaven's sake don't stay in the garage but get outside into a well-ventilated, open space. Never refill a small engine, like your lawnmower, when it is running or still hot. The heat can ignite the vapors. If you store gasoline, buy a safety can. Never carry extra gasoline in your car trunk, unless you have one of the new cans specially made for the purpose. Such cans will be clearly labeled as to their safety.

Q: Why should I keep anti-freeze in my car all year round?

A: Because anti-freeze does more than just protect the engine block in cold weather. These days it's called coolant, which describes more accurately what it does. A mixture of coolant and water not only protects the car in cold weather, but cools more effectively than plain water. In addition, modern coolants have anti-corrosion additives to protect the water pump and the water passages from deterioration and mineral buildup.

Q: Is it legal to put a police radio monitor in my car?

A: In some places a monitor is OK, but not in all states. Passing on information received over a police radio monitor is a violation of the Federal Communications Act of 1934 and is illegal everywhere. Transmitters are not legal.

Q: Should the fluid in my car's power-steering unit be changed?

A: Under normal circumstances, power-steering fluid doesn't need to be changed, although the level should be checked occasionally and additional fluid added if needed. If the car has had engine trouble and has overheated, it might be necessary to change the power-steering fluid because it will break down under high temps.

Q: Is there a good general rule on when to replace old tires?

A: Tires wear out at different rates, depending on quality, road conditions, and driver habits. Some tires have built-in "wear bars" which appear as smooth bands across the face of the tire when only 1/16-inch of tread remains. You can measure the tread yourself. If no ruler is handy, just take out a Lincoln head penny; hold it by the neck side (head pointing down) and insert it into the groove between the treads. If the top of Abe's head shows, the tread is probably worn below the danger line. You should also check with tire dealers and mechanics.

Q: Can wheel alignment affect my car's gas mileage?

A: Sure. A major oil company recently

A Yes.

reported that a poorly aligned wheel can cause as much "drag" as if it were being pulled sideways 40 feet out of every mile traveled. That's a lot of drag, and a lot of extra gas. Have your wheel balance and alignment checked regularly, and rotate your tires according to factory recommendations. By the way, you should also maintain your tire pressure at the recommended level to reduce "rolling resistance" between tire and highway. The Tire Industry Safety Council has estimated that underinflated tires *alone* can reduce your mileage as much as five percent.

Q: What's the best way to prevent corrosion on my car battery terminals?

A: Clean them regularly with a wire brush. If you don't let the corrosion build up too much, the terminals are easy to clean and maintain. Make sure the insides of the clamps that go around the terminals are also clean. After all the parts are free of corrosion, coat the terminals and clamps (inside and out) with petroleum jelly before hooking the battery back up.

Q: People always talk about "driving habits" influencing gas mileage. What "driving habits?"

A: The simplest measure is to avoid jackrabbit starts and stops. Most drivers press the gas pedal down too far, pumping more fuel through the engine than it can handle. Accelerating hard and then jamming on the brakes at the next light wastes fuel and wears out the brakes faster. Don't start the engine until you are ready to go. Many people start it as soon as they get into the car, then adjust the mirror, buckle the seat belt and wait for their passengers to get in. And don't run the engine while waiting for the drive-in bank teller to process your deposit. If the engine is warm it takes almost no fuel to restart it.

Q: I seem to encounter blind spots on some highways even when I'm in a passing zone. How do they decide where to put the "passing" and "no-passing" lines?

A: The location of such zones is determined by the visibility from a set "eye height" above the roadway, which is a theoretical average. In other words, if you drive a pickup truck you'll be able to see much farther than if you drive a low-slung sports car. The eye height used to determine passing zones is being reduced due to the increase in smaller cars with lower driving positions.

Q: During the recent ice storms I noticed highway crews often put sand or gravel on freeway overpasses, but not on the ground level stretches of highway. Why?

A: It's a matter of priorities. Overpasses and bridges get colder and freeze faster because the air is cooling them on both sides. They can freeze even when the rest of the highway (partially insulated by the ground beneath) remains unfrozen. Many an accident has occurred when an unwary motorist sped onto a bridge covered with so-called "black ice."

Q: What might cause my 8-year-old car's steering to seem loose—too easy to turn with a lot of play in the wheel?

A: Several problems might cause this. If the car has power steering, the belt may be worn or loose and need replacement. Worn shock absorbers can cause the problem, as may loose wheel bearings or a worn steering linkage. Steering problems can pose a serious safety threat. See a mechanic immediately.

Q: Is a wet road more slippery the colder it gets?

A: No. Conditions can be most dangerous just at 32 degrees, when unfrozen water may be found on top of a layer of ice. You simply must reduce your traveling speed in such weather. Also, avoid sudden braking or steering movements; they can trigger a skid. If you do slip into a skid, *don't* slam on the brakes; you'll only make things worse. Let up on the gas and steer into the skid until you regain control.

Q: Obviously the faster you are going when you have a wreck, the more dangerous it is. But are there statistics which show how much more so?

A: Plenty. The probability of a fatality in a crash roughly doubles as traveling speed increases from 45 to 60 mph, and doubles again as speed increases to 70 mph. They didn't just pull the 55 mph speed limit out of a hat. In 1974, the first year of 55 mph, national highway deaths dropped by 9,393.

we're making PROGRESS

by Capt C. S. PUGSLEY III

In 1978 the Air Force had the fewest traffic fatalities in the history of the service. One reason for this record is the Air Force's dynamic approach to the education of its personnel on traffic accidents – the multimedia Traffic Safety Education Program.

The Air Force has pioneered in the development of multimedia technology as it relates to traffic education. Multimedia is just what the name implies – the concurrent use of several modes of getting a message across. Still photos, visual graphics and films are put together with recorded messages to convey the information. More than 3.5 million Air Force members have viewed, studied and discussed the program since its inception.

Through this program, the Air Force driver or potential driver is made aware of the mistakes he or she makes – estimated at one mistake in every two miles for the average driver – and is taught better driving techniques. When the students learn these, they are more likely to change their attitudes about driving and carry their improved attitudes onto the streets and highways as better drivers and passengers.

Multimedia traffic education is only one facet of the extremely diverse Air Force Traffic Safety Education Program, which seeks to reduce accidents and injuries of Air Force personnel to an absolute minimum. The success of the program is dependent on well-informed and aware Air Force drivers. Police, jurists, corporate safety executives, and educational television authorities all agree that this multimedia approach to traffic education can produce results. The Air Force's record in 1978 backs up this claim.

Timely Topics

A CAUTION FROM THE "BACKYARD MECHANIC"

In the "SAY, SMOKEY" column of February's issue of *Popular Science* magazine, there is the following letter from a backyard mechanic describing what happened to him as he was performing routine repairs on his van. Read and heed . . . 'nuff said.

"They've removed the bandages, so I can see to write about my accident.

"After I did some tappet work on my Chevy six in a van, it wouldn't start. The coughing and spitting, and a quick check of firing order, suggested that the distributor was off by 180 degrees.

"So I pulled the distributor out to give it half a turn, wires and all attached. I was kneeling on the seat directly over it. As it cleared the port a blast occurred, hitting me squarely in the eyes; no hard pieces, but the impact of the grease and grime split my cornea and imbedded it there—it had to be surgically removed. The dipstick cleared my shoulder without incident and landed well out in the yard. Good fortune had people there to get me to the doctor.

"My analysis is that:

1. The engine was flooded in the first starting attempt.
2. Fuel seeped down the bores and vaporized in the crankcase.
3. The ignition (which I didn't think to check) was still on.
4. As the distributor was pulled from the block it caused an arc, igniting the vapor."

G. W. C.
White Plains, NY

"Nice you can see again. Read ***Popular Science*** *five or six months back and you will find that some cat named Smokey said home fixing might not be the smart plan . . .*

"What happened in your case was that the engine flooded because it was out of time. You pulled the plug wires off, left the key on, and when you pulled the distributor out, the distributor shaft rotated, producing a spark. The spark jumped to ground. Vapor was there –and bang.

"This mistake has been made many times. Best job I've seen so far was with a propane truck that got two people and wiped out the whole garage."

GAS FILTER RECALL

The Fram Corp. of East Providence, RI 02916 has announced the voluntary recall of 175,000 G-22 gas filters, some of which may be defective. Although Fram has had no reports of fires or injuries, it does not want to take any chances. The recalled filters, which were manufactured for use in Ford cars or trucks newer than 1965 and in 1969 Ramblers, retail for about $3.65 and are most frequently replaced when a car owner has a tuneup. However, many car owners install the filters themselves. WHAT TO DO: Have a mechanic check your car to see if you have a G-22 filter and then check for any gas leakage. If you notice such leakage, have the filter changed immediately, keep the old filter and sales slip for the new one, and mail them to Fram at the address listed above. The company will reimburse you for your expenses.

PAY FOR AIR?

Now that some states have outlawed pay toilets, the company that makes the coin mechanism, Nik-O-Lok of Indianapolis, has come up with a new gimmick,

CoinAir. It's a vending machine that replaces gas station air pumps, charging a quarter for four minutes of previously free air for inflating tires. About 600 gas stations now have the new machine, much to the dismay of motorists. To those who protest, Nik-O-Lok vice president Martin Miller says simply: "If you think air is free, try blowing up a tire with your mouth."

NHTSA strongly opposes this, on the grounds that drivers already neglect proper tire inflation and are sure to be even more lax when charges are involved. The agency has appealed to the oil companies to keep free air available. The outcome remains to be seen.

SHELL ANSWER BOOKS

All branches of the Armed Services that fly airplanes have well-staffed, command-backed Aircraft Safety Departments. The primary purpose of these departments is to save lives and money by preventing aircraft accidents. Statistics are kept, trends are noted, information concerning accidents is promulgated and, all in all, they do a pretty good job . . . BUT . . . the number of military personnel killed and injured each year in automobile accidents far exceeds the number killed or injured in aircraft accidents. Vehicles are plentiful and most military personnel own or have ready access to some type of motorized transportation. Programs to educate our personnel concerning automobiles and highways need greater emphasis in most commands.

The Shell Oil Company has 15 colorful, illustrated and informative pamphlets called "The Shell Answer Books." Shell advertises these pamphlets on national television and, as a public service, makes them available in quantity to groups or organizations requesting them. These pamphlets could be used to rejuvenate, in conjunction with or as the basis for implementing, a drive safe program in your command. Let's keep the statistics on military highway fatalities down by continually educating our personnel about the dangers associated with the highways. If you are interested in obtaining the Shell Answer Books for your command, write to: Shell Answer Books, P.O. Box 61609, Houston, Texas 77208.

Submitted by:
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HELSUPPRON Eleven
NAS North Island
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WHAT "ONE TOO MANY" CAN COST

If you owned a 1978 Chevrolet Malibu and carried a conventional package of insurance coverages and limits, here is how a DWI conviction would influence your premiums. Remember, the DWI penalty continues for three years.

Location	Clean Record	DWI	Additional Yearly DWI Cost
Baltimore, MD	$385	$791	$406
Fairfax, VA	$231	$536	$305
Honolulu, HI	$287	$659	$372
Long Beach, CA	$330	$764	$434
Winston-Salem, NC	$184	$787	$603
Seattle, WA	$275	$598	$323

The middle column shows premium samples for people who are kept on by their insurers after a DWI. We call this the "voluntary" market, because companies voluntarily accepted the person as a risk. Serious DWI's frequently end in cancellations, throwing the former policyholder into the state's Automobile Insurance Plan. AIP's usually charge considerably higher premiums than those available in the voluntary market.

Courtesy of AIDE, the Insurance Magazine from USAA

The California Department of Transportation, city governments, and the "Commuter Computer" group are sponsoring a program called "Come Together," an effort to promote carpooling and the use of mass transit in Southern California.

cooperative conservation

The hows and whys of the car pool

APRIL FOOL'S SECTION, UTOPIA DIVISION

In the latter days of 1978 an obscure scientist discovered a way to recover low-sulfur crude oil by a chemical reaction between dead fish and old "I Love Lucy" films. The almost inexhaustible supply of both items in the United States gave that country the leadership in oil production in the world. Further, vast new oil reserves were discovered in early 1979 under New York City after a giant ape fell from the World Trade Center and created a twenty-foot-deep hole in the pavement.

With these new supplies available to the world's largest user of petroleum, the United States was able to satisfy all its needs, and to begin to export oil to the nations of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. Prices of oil on the world market fell to an all-time low and gasoline began selling for 20 cents a gallon by July.

Despite the glut of gasoline, the citizens of the United States discovered carpooling allowed them to do a couple of their favorite pastimes while riding to work—eating and sleeping. Carpools with six people were the average, and those drivers with kitchen-equipped motorhomes turned their vehicles into "Rolling Restaurants" serving 20 or more. Traffic was reduced to such an extent that only one-tenth as many cars travelled the nation's highways during rush-hours. The numbers of vehicles on the roads kept diminishing as drivers of single-occupant cars got lonely for someone to talk to on the way to work.

Entire highways were shut down for lack of traffic, while on others special lanes were set aside for motorcycles only.

With the traffic becoming more spread-out, the government was able to drop the restriction on speed and the average climbed back to 70 mph. The occupants of the well-loaded vehicles began to respect the speed and to use seatbelts as they rode. The usual reason given was, "Hey! It's the only bod I got!"

The lack of traffic and the use of safety devices drove the highway accident statistics to a mere fraction of their former levels. Greater distance between cars gave more reaction time, and accidents were fewer and less severe.

This was especially noted in the U.S. military services, where fatal accidents were eliminated during 1979. . . .

Buried in that bit of nonsense, you'll find a reference to carpools. You remember carpools—those ride-sharing conveniences that enjoyed a brief vogue about five years ago. The reason for their popularity was not the loneliness of the long distance driver but *conservation*.

Of course we're talking about the gasoline shortage. We all remember the headaches and inconvenience of the Arab oil embargo of 1973—the long lines waiting at the service stations for gas that might or might not be there for us when our turn finally came at the pumps.

And we also remember the push for carpooling that came along with the gas shortage. Everywhere there were signs, slogans and commercials repeating the virtues of driving with at least one other person. Carpools sprang up and people cut back on their driving and shared the expense with others.

continued

More carpools could cut down on the congestion at the gate, as well as on the streets and highways.

(above)
Imagine this: The only parking space you can find is in the foreground, and you work in the recesses of the main building. Get out the joggin' shoes . . .

(left)
Now imagine this: You ride in a carpool and you get to park only a couple of rows from the main entrance.

And once the "scare" of no gasoline had passed, people returned to their old ways, with one person in each car.

The experts tell us the shortage of gasoline might happen again in certain circumstances. The recent upheavals in the oil-producing nations of the world have shown us that our supplies of that liquid are not as secure as we would like. While this fact has major and far-reaching effects on the country, it also has smaller effects on each individual, for which we should be prepared.

Dive in the pool: That means: Back to carpools. But why did we get away from them in the first place? For a while it looked like gasoline would be a permanently scarce item. Perhaps carpools died out because the publicity

continued

for them dwindled after gas became plentiful again – although at a much higher price.

We think one reason people quit carpooling is that they considered it inconvenient. They thought, "I have to be at this place at 7:25, and at that place at 7:35 and then at work at 8:00. I have to wait until Joan and Bill get to the car before I can take off after work . . ." If they didn't like the arrangement, they simply dropped out under some excuse or failed to re-establish the pool after a vacation.

And yet four people who live near each other driving four cars to the same destination to start work at the same time makes less sense than ever. There are more cars than there were in 1973 so driving in rush hour is anything but pleasant. Gas costs much more – you were paying 30 cents a gallon in 1973; now it's 75 or more.

So let's talk about going back to the carpool – an exercise in cooperative conservation.

There are many benefits that could be derived if the majority of people pooled to work. For instance, there would be much less congestion on the streets and highways. Less congestion would mean fewer accidents and it would cut down on frayed nerves of individual drivers. Fewer cars would lead to less energy consumption, which would cut down on the pollution we suffer presently. At work, entry and exit of parking lots would be simplified, and you could get to and from work more quickly. More pleasant all the way around.

One by one: That's if everyone did it. But "everyone" is made up of individuals. You start small, and it grows. Perhaps if you and your neighbor started a carpool other workers would see the benefits you would gain and they would want to try it too.

Because there are individual benefits to pooling. Most employers offer preferred parking to poolers. On some installations, with long distances between parking areas and the office, this could be a convincing lure.

What about purely personal reasons? Wouldn't it be more pleasant to have company on that monotonous drive you make about 50 weeks out of the year? Wouldn't it be pleasant to have someone else scrape the snow and ice off every other week in the winter, so you could leave the house and get into a warm car? Wouldn't it be nice to have the chance to sleep a little on the way to work? (On those weeks when you *aren't* driving, please!)

Makes cents: But let's not overlook the most convincing benefits of cooperative conservation – cost benefits. Carpooling saves you money when you spread the expense of driving out among the other members of the pool. The amount of money you'll save will depend on your driving distance, the mileage your car gets, the cost of gasoline and the number of people in the carpool. But you will save, and you'll save a lot more money than you did in 1973. Everything is more expensive – gas, oil, highway taxes, car prices.

The less money you have to spend on gas and maintenance to your chariot, the more money you have to spend on really important things like a wet suit, records, new ski boots, stuff like that. Do you feel like you have an excess of money? If not, think about giving a little less of it to the oil companies and a little more to those other merchants.

Let's make some simple calculations. You live, say, ten miles from work so you drive 20 miles, round trip, each day. If gasoline costs 70 cents a gallon and your car gets 20 miles to the gallon, you expend 70 cents-worth of gasoline every day. If you carried one other person who paid half the expenses, you'd pay 35 cents a day for gas.

"Big deal," you say. Look at it another way: The gas in our example costs the driver (you) about $14.00 a month. Driving one other person saves you half, $7.00. If you drove two other people, you'd pay $4.66. If you drove three other people, you'd pay $3.50. And so forth. (If your car gets fewer than 20 miles to the gallon, you would save more in this situation – because it costs *more* to operate the car that is less fuel-efficient.)

Other costs: And that's only considering the cost of gasoline, which is only a small part of the expense of operating a car. The American Automobile Association (AAA) has a very interesting pamphlet entitled "Your Driving Costs," in which there is an explanation of how to figure the cost of driving your car. Rather than go into these calculations, let's look at their national average.

They used "a 1978 Chevelle, 8-cylinder (305 cu. in.) Malibu Classic four-door sedan with standard accessories, automatic transmission, power steering, power disc brakes and radio, driven up to 15,000 miles per year. All insurance is based on a pleasure category where the vehicle is driven less than 10 miles to or from work and there is no youthful operator."

Their example gave the cost of gas, tires and maintenance as 5.65 cents per mile. The cost of insurance, license, registration, taxes and depreciation totalled $3.81 per day. This calculated out to 19.6 cents per mile at 10,000 miles a year, and they add, "The more you drive the less the per mile cost will be. Conversely, a reduction in mileage will raise the per mile cost." At 20,000 miles a year, the same car would cost 13.6 cents a mile to operate. (Remember, though, that while *per mile* costs may be lower, *total* costs will be higher. Driving less is less expensive, overall.)

At that, our 20-mile trip to work and back costs $2.72 per day, or $13.60 a week, or better than $54 a month.

And gasoline costs more this year, and it's due to rise even further. What about parking fees, which some of you may have to consider? And tolls for bridges or turnpikes?

Whew! Are you convinced yet?

Who drives when? We're not saying you have to get into a lot of heavy arithmetic if you don't want to. How

continued

hello out there

We figure there must be some bases out there that have ride-sharing programs already in effect. We'd like to hear from you. How were they set up? How many are there? Have they alleviated traffic problems around the base? What are some of the problems you've run into, and what have you done to solve them? Tell us anything you know that could be helpful to other installations.

continued

you set up the pool is up to you and your fellow participants. If you take turns driving you could arrange it so that the person who drives pays for all the expenses. Yourself this week, Joe next week when he drives, and so on.

While we're on that, how is the driving taken care of? Does each person in the pool take his turn to drive for a week, or do you alternate days? What about having one person drive all the time? It might happen – we know some people who are excellent drivers, but make lousy passengers. If one person drives, the others might offer him special benefits, like paying for all the expense of commuting.

Again the means are up to you and your fellow poolers. That's the advantage of carpooling. It's a voluntary, cooperative arrangement and you can set the pool up to suit yourselves. Carpools could help us avoid the *non*-voluntary, government-ordered measures like gas rationing.

Ah, togetherness! You arrive at work rested, alert, and ready for the challenges of the day. When you're riding along with others, you can read a newspaper, look at the scenery, or even get a few more minutes of sleep.

Think ahead: Okay, back to the setup. How do we go about cooperating? The arrangements can be made informally, with a few friends, or the employer can try to publicize pools and convince employees of the benefits of ridesharing. And it's much easier to take the first steps now, before the long lines at the pumps begin again.

First, the informal arrangement: You could find neighbors who work where you do and set up a carpool. This is fairly easy if they're convinced of the necessity of pooling, and if you know co-workers in your neighborhood. If you don't, there are the bulletin boards at work, and the company newsletters or base papers, where "riders wanted" announcements could be placed.

As we said, they have to be convinced pooling is necessary, so in the long run it may be easier if the installation started a campaign to promote carpooling.

That's what has happened in DRIVER's locale, at March AFB and Norton AFB. The California Department of Transportation, local city governments and a non-profit group called "Commuter Computer" have started a ride-sharing program called "Come Together." With the cooperation of businesses, industries and government agencies, these groups survey employees to determine the numbers interested in setting up carpools or van pools, or in using mass transit to get to work. The results of the surveys at Norton and March are not in as yet.

Computers, anyone? Using a computer to set up carpools is a simple, efficient operation. The data on the interested people, including their addresses and work times are fed into the computer. The computer chews up the information and spits out a listing of the people who live within a certain radius of each proposed carpooler. Then the actual arrangement of the pool is left up to the participants.

What do you do if you need more information on how to set up a pool? You can contact your base transportation squadron for any facts they may have. Other sources you might try are auto clubs, oil companies, and offices of the Department of Transportation. Also, your area may have one of the groups that encourage carpooling, like Southern California's Commuter Computer. Any of these may be helpful.

Suggestions: Before we leave this discussion, here are some rules of cooperation that will make your carpool more efficient, and more pleasant for all involved:

1. Agree on some ground rules of behavior *before* the pooling begins. That way you can say, "Remember we agreed not to smoke in the car," rather than "I wish you wouldn't do that," followed by an argument. Some things to consider are smoking, conversation, where each pooler sits, use of air conditioner and heater, radio stations, etc. Any one of these, or all of them, might be unimportant to each member of the group, but you must know beforehand to avoid possible unpleasantness.

2. Have a definite schedule for when each person drives. This will also stop misunderstandings. You can set this up how you like, but we'll suggest that weekly or monthly rotation of drivers is much less confusing than daily rotation.

3. Set up a chain of communication, in case of emergencies like illnesses or car breakdowns. It is most convenient to follow the morning pick-up schedule. If one person is ill, he should call the driver and also the next person on the list, who will then get ready earlier. That person will call the next one, and so on.

4. Make an agreement beforehand on the payment schedule of driving expenses. You might want the driver to pay for all expenses when he drives, or you might want to split total expenses for each trip by the number of poolers. The latter is the simplest way – and simpler is better. In line with this, set up payments no more often than once a week; this saves a lot of hassle.

5. It is the responsibility of each car's owner to make sure it is clean,

After work, you can gather and shove off for home. Four of this group get to leave their cars at home, and relax while they're commuting. Only one of them has to fight the traffic, and then only every fifth week.

Here's another advantage of carpooling—the coveted *reserved parking space.* Don't laugh. For a lot of people, this benefit is a very convincing one.

comfortable and serviced. That means no junk or trash in the way of the passengers. That also means enough room for everyone (no six people in a Honda). As an addition to this, it is the responsibility of the poolers to comply with reasonable wishes of the driver: If he doesn't want smoking in his car, he has that right.

6. Make sure beforehand about the insurance coverage necessary for an arrangement like a carpool. Liability may be sufficient, but you should check to make sure. Your insurance company, or the staff judge advocate can help here.

7. Have the schedule of when passengers are to be picked up and stick to it. Don't honk to alert them you're there; the neighbors may be sleeping. Wait for a set amount of time and then go on. (Of course, if he has his little daughter run out and tell you he'll be delayed, wait so long as it won't make the pool late to work. The schedule should allow enough time for difficulties that might delay the pool from arriving. Your boss might not understand.

8. Speaking of the schedule, don't make side trips. These are annoying to the other poolers, and could lead to arguments and the breakup of the pool.

9. Expect changes in the pool. If someone changes jobs or work schedules, or if he moves, he might have to drop out. Be prepared to look for someone else to join up.

Carpools can be set up in spacious vans, which allow for more passengers to share the cost savings.

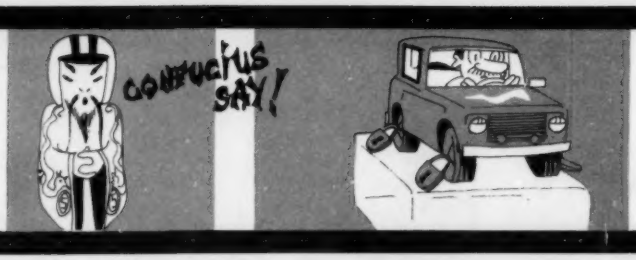
10. (Need we say it? We will.) Drive safely. It's not just you in that car. Be sure to wear your seatbelts. As the driver, you are responsible for your passengers – make sure they buckle up too. Never speed or drive carelessly, and don't allow the other drivers to do it either. In this regard, it may be wise to avoid all distractions to the driver at all times.

Cooperation: One more reminder: Remember this is a cooperative effort and one person who is unhappy with the carpool may drop out and make it less economical for the others. You need all the other members of the pool to make it work well.

Now, we know there's someone out there who's not the least bit impressed with all this talk of "cooperative conservation." You know who you are. You're not convinced, and you're not concerned about conserving the nation's oil reserves, or your own money reserves. To you we say: Ain't it lonely out there on the road at 6 a.m. in your car with only a half-witted disc jockey on the radio for company? Wouldn't it be nice to have someone to talk to. someone just to keep you awake?

BACKfire

LETTERS to the EDITOR



4-WHEELIN' ON ICE

I've got a few additions to the article in your May '78 issue about 4-wheelin', specifically about 4-wheelin' on ice. Not only are the front wheels locked to the engine (in 4x4) and unable to freewheel for a power recovery from a skid, they are also locked to the rear wheels. This means that on ice, applying the brakes can stop all four wheels instead of just the front pair. This induces a skid very easily. I should know . . . I've experienced this "4-wheel-hockey-puck" type of skid! Four-wheel drive does have its limits. Remember, in terms of traction on ice, the arithmetic goes: four times nothin' = two times nothin' = nothin'.

Mr. Donald I. Promish
Montgomery Court C-11
Narberth, PA 19072

You're right . . . 4-wheeling isn't always a piece of cake.

ADVICE

Since your article on "Offensive Driving" in September 1978 DRIVER I've noticed you've received several interesting letters from drivers who emulate Turk Wrench's style. To them I would offer a word of advice; "'Tis better to let people think you're a fool, than to speak and remove all doubt."

YN1 M.L. Turk, USN
HQ MEPCOM WCS
OARB, Building 1
Oakland, CA 94626

They not only have different views on driving techniques, but Yeoman Turk is no relation to Turk Wrench.

MOTORCYCLING

You folks really do put out an excellent publication. I should have written sooner but I've been busy the last 15 years so . . .

As I am a motorcycle operator, I usually turn to your pieces on cycles before the other stuff and I have found them to be great both for the beginner and the more experienced cyclist.

The article by Roger Hull was probably the best of its type that I have read in some time. I would like to point out two niggling (from the verb "to niggle") items. He mentions keeping the bike in gear at a stop sign or stop light but does not caution against the possibility of the clutch cable breaking and sending one's self and machine into traffic. It *does* happen. Also, he mentions two cycles passing in the same lane if both operators know what's going on. Done it myself, yes indeed . . . however . . .in Florida, and I'm sure a lot of other states too, the maneuver is illegal. (No, I didn't get caught.) A vehicle passing another vehicle must use a separate lane.

TSgt L.R. Kinney, USAF
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Satellite Beach, FL 32937

DRIVING ON SNOW AND ICE

First let me say I have been a DRIVER reader since the first issue and I think your articles and writers are getting better with each issue. Lots of good stuff—keep up the good work!

Now what I am writing about is the "Anti-Freeze" article in the Oct '78 issue. Excellent material, but I feel two very important points were left out when it comes to driving on snow and ice. Being an ex-Plattsburgh, NY driver I speak from experience.

What you forgot to mention was coming to a stop during the time the car is warming up (and at times after warmup; this applies to cars equipped with automatic choke and automatic transmissions). When you approach the stop, the helpful little item on the carburetor called the fast idle cam (connected to the automatic choke and works in conjunction with same) will still be ON, that is, will be holding the engine idle above normal. What will happen is the engine is idling fast (some cars around 1000 rpm or more) the transmission is still pulling, and due to engineering design the front brakes on your car will lock first, consequently the rear wheels are still turning and will drive you right through the stop. Plus, with locked front wheels you have lost directional control.

The thing to do to prevent this is to put the tranny in neutral as you approach the stop to remove the drive force from the rear wheels. I might also mention that front wheel drive vehicles should do the same as it may require locking the brakes to stop wheel drive, thereby losing directional control.

As I mentioned before, this can also happen "after the initial warmup" especially those vehicles equipped with OVERSIZED cooling systems (they are doing their job of extra cooling for summer driving). I have experienced wind chill factor changes while driving and the cooling system and engine would cool down enough to cause the automatic choke to cone ON again. Naturally the fast idle cam will follow. Nothing is more surprising (and sickening) than to approach the stop slowly, as mentioned in your article, and find yourself still moving and you don't know what else to do to stop the thing short of throwing out the anchor chain.

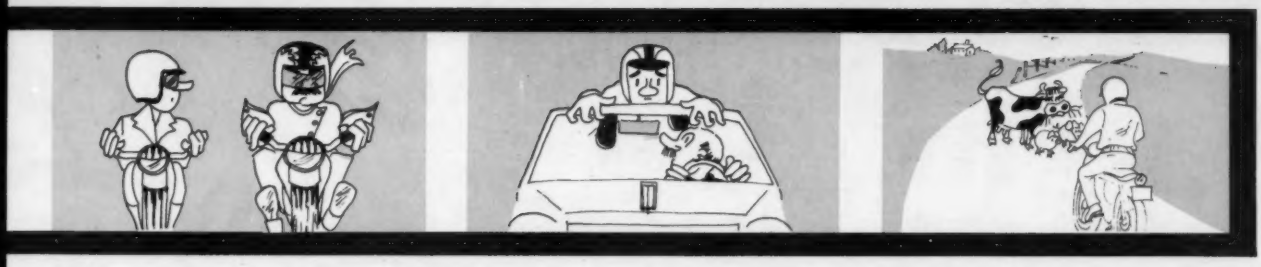
The second thing I feel important to mention is making that turn. Try to avoid turns at intersections and road accesses, especially those shopping center parking lot entrances that angle steeply down and out. Sometimes, no matter how slowly you approach these type turns, the sheer weight of the vehicle will cause you to slide sideways through the turn. I hope these points will save a few fender benders and lots of frustration for your readers.

MSgt Clayton G. Cleaver
Box 1602
APO New York 09194

WATCH OUT FOR ANIMALS

I am a cycle rider and I appreciate your articles on safety. I got a new insight into risky riders' similarities. Sgt Holt's "Are You Ready?" (Dec '78 DRIVER) was a little better reading than most safety articles.

Dr. Alvarez's "DISCIPLINE: Key Word to Motorcycle Safety" was good.



He brought up the point of animals being a hazard. In the suburbs it is dogs and deer and all manner of four-legged beasts. I would like to add one personal observation: Deer are usually in groups. If one crosses the road in front of you, you can be sure another will try even if it sees you coming. I've spared a few deer their lives and avoided dented metal. Now I have a cycle and hitting one could be deadly to me.

Thanks for the advice. I appreciated the articles and intend to avoid tattoos.

Pfc Arthur Foulk, USA
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R1, Box 30-A
Ft Benning, GA 31905

The reference to tattoos is from Dr. H. Hurt, who said in our December issue that tattoos are a prime indicator of the risk-taking character of an individual.

THE SAFEST WAY TO CRASH . . . DON'T

On 8 December '78, I was leaving NAB Little Creek and traveling on my 500 Yamaha to a farewell party for a departing Sgt. While on my way, in medium to heavy traffic, a car pulled from a side street to make a left turn in the direction I had just come from. I was doing approximately 45 when I saw this car, and saw it cut off and stop completely across my lane. There was a car on my right and curbing for the median on the left, so I tried to make it around the back end, behind the car that was on my right. Thank God I didn't panic and applied my brakes correctly.

The bike started to yaw with the rear coming around to the left. I was doing approximately 35 when I struck the left rear fender of the car; the impact threw the bike out of the yaw and into the car, but I kept going up and over the top. Fortunately, I was able to slow myself using my hands on the roof of the car, and go into a roll, landing 10 or so feet from the car. I was not injured (surprising, no?) but the bike estimate came to $1450, totalled.

If I had not braked correctly, I feel I may not have survived at all.

P.S. I don't have any tattoos!

LCPL S.E. Keller, USMC
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NAB Little Creek
Norfolk, VA 23521

GETTING UNSTUCK

In the "Timely Topics" column of the Dec '78 DRIVER, Dr. Hauser suggested the use of warm, soapy water for unsticking skin when a cyanocrylate adhesive is involved. I might suggest that the use of good old fingernail polish remover works just as well and much faster.

SKCS John J. Cook, USCG
Third CG District Office
Governors Island, NY 10004

Thanks, John, for the tip!

HELMET AND FAIRING A MUST

In your Dec '78 article "Are You Ready?" you briefly mentioned the advantage of better cycle visibility provided by the large fairings. I would like to add another advantage – leg protection!

Last summer while riding my 750 Honda equipped with a Vetter fairing I was involved in an accident which really made me appreciate the value of the fairing. While riding at approximately 45 mph, a large car passed on the left, missed his left turn and veered right to make a U-turn. The front fender hit my fairing and caused me to lose control and slide on its side down the rough shoulder. The fairing took the collision impact, held the cycle up off my leg and also prevented the front wheel from digging in and possibly causing the cycle to flip. I was still "on" the cycle when it stopped, but thank goodness my leg wasn't broken or ground to hamburger. I came away with only a cracked bone in my left foot which didn't require a cast.

After a helmet, a Vetter fairing is a MUST on my list of cycle equipment!

SFC James A. Rice, USA
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MOTORCYCLE MEDICAL INSURANCE

As a regular DRIVER reader, I find the endless series of anti-helmet law letters in the "Backfire" section somewhat tedious. Safety devices, as you point out, are with us in automobiles and many other places; let's face it, a motorcycle helmet is about the only thing a rider has going for him in the event of a crash or fall. Even so, the number of people protesting helmet laws in the name of irresponsible "freedom" is legion, many of whom (officers and NCOs) should know better.

Since motorcycle medical insurance premiums reflect the high injury propensity of motorcycle riders, *especially* those without helmets, I have a modest proposal which should satisfy everyone, even the "helmet laws . . ." diehards. Allow insurance companies to sell policies, with lower premiums, to motorcycle riders who certify that they always wear a helmet (the policy would be invalid, of course, if the rider were ever arrested or involved in an accident without a helmet). Then helmet laws would become superfluous, and the noisy "no-helmet" minority could have their way – and pay for the privilege. I am damned tired of paying inflated insurance premiums because a few motorcycle riders have subconscious death wishes.

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☆U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1979—683-012/6

WHAT CAUSES TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS?

1. Speed too fast for conditions.
2. Failure to yield right-of-way.
3. Improper lane change (including passing).
4. Overtaking slower vehicles (surface streets and rural roads).
5. Improper turns (usually surface streets).
6. Following too close (freeways).

DRIVER ERRORS!